

Reflections

Guest Editorial: **Dr. Jennifer Blundell**

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So much has happened since I was summoned to Matron's office one day in 1974 and asked if I was able to attend a Neurosurgical conference in Canberra and meet with other nurses who worked in neurosurgery. On the evening of the 4th of May about 20 of us squashed into a hotel room to listen to Toni Koenen and by the end of the evening had agreed to form the Australasian Neurosurgical Nurses Association (ANNA) and started to develop nine aims and objectives of the Association with the aim of developing and advancing neuroscience nursing.

While some of these aims were ambitious and took longer to achieve in the early years, they have all been met and continue to be demonstrated through both the work of ANNA in promoting education in neuroscience knowledge and nursing care and by the many nurses who work in the diverse areas of neuroscience patient care.

Much has happened over the last 50 years within both neuroscience and nursing knowledge and education. Research and technology have resulted in the development of technology such as ICP monitors, intraoperative equipment, and diagnostic scanning. These have aided advances in neurosurgery and treatments that have decreased post operative complications. Other developments have helped patients with chronic neu-

rological and neurodegenerative conditions by controlling symptoms or slowing progression and allowing maintenance of a better quality of life than was possible fifty years ago. However, in some areas the search for answers is still ongoing and our role is to support patients and families throughout their journey.

Throughout these fifty years, as with nursing overall, these changes have increased the knowledge and skills needed by nurses caring for persons with neuroscience problems as well as increased the scope of practice both within and outside the hospital walls. I am not sure that any of us at that 1974 meeting could have foreseen the vital role that neuroscience nurses play today. Similarly, the aim of clinical nursing research seemed elusive for some years. Today, I see this demonstrated by nurses working from the diverse fields of neuroscience nursing in publications and conference presentations, and in post-graduate study both through ANNA and other venues.

Lastly, ANNA has survived for fifty years, through the dedicated work of all those neuroscience nurses, and those who supported them, who laid down the foundations and have contributed to the Association at a National and State level. I hope that during this year you will be able to gain an understanding of the milestones of these last fifty years and appreciate the context within which ANNA grew.

Jenni



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